

Expressive Therapies

Creating a safe and empowering space for equality with – race, gender, sexuality, age, economic status, cognitive, physical, spiritual needs and those living with mental illness – through trauma-informed care: music therapy, art therapy, dance/movement therapy, and psychotherapy, to improve health and well-being.

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Get-to-Know the Creative Arts Therapies at ETLLC

March is an important month for creative arts therapies! The month of March is designated Music Therapy Month in the State of Wisconsin, and World Music Therapy Day falls on March 1st. We recognize National Art Therapy Awareness Day on March 23rd and National Arts Advocacy Day on March 28th. And in addition to all of these,

Creative Arts Therapy Week is March 13th through 19th. To celebrate these days of recognition of creative arts therapy, this newsletter will offer a brief introduction and snapshot of each of the creative arts therapies that are offered at Expressive Therapies!

See what the therapists at Expressive Therapies have to share about their own and their colleagues' fields, and be sure to check out the various links, resources, or previous ETLLC newsletters for any additional information!

World Music Therapy Day - March 1st

National Art Therapy Awareness Day - March 23rd

National Arts Advocacy Day - March 28th

Creative Arts Therapy Week - March 13th thru 19th

State of Wisconsin Music Therapy Month

Music Therapy

Expressive Therapies has a team of 10 music therapists, in addition to 2 music therapy interns, who provide group and individual music therapy sessions to a variety of clients who come to the office for services and to individuals and groups out in the Fox Valley community! So, what is music therapy?

What is Music Therapy?

Music therapy is a creative health profession in which the therapist engages clients in music experiences and interventions that are designed to address needs in a variety of skill areas. Some of these skill areas include:

cognitive, emotional, physical, psychological, and social. Music itself activates every part of the brain, making it an incredible tool for addressing and developing skills in a variety of need areas. Music therapy interventions are evidence-based, meaning that they are informed and supported by research, and music therapy researchers continue to engage in studies to further explore the benefits of music therapy and promote best practice.

Music therapy was first introduced in the 1950s and has continued to grow since. Music therapists must earn a college degree in music therapy, complete an internship, and pass the national certification exam in order to obtain the credential "Music Therapist - Board Certified," or "MT-BC." Music therapists can also pursue additional training in different music therapy treatment approaches, such as Neurologic Music Therapy (NMT) or The Bonny Method of Guided Imagery Through Music (BMGIM). NMT techniques are specifically designed to address needs in the areas of speech and language, cognition, and sensorimotor. BMGIM is a music-centered, consciousness-expanding therapy. Therapists trained in the Bonny Method choose classical music sequences that stimulate journeys of the imagination. Experiencing imagery in this way facilitates clients' integration of mental, emotional, physical and spiritual aspects of well-being.



Music Therapy Examples

Some examples of music therapy that you might see at Expressive Therapies include:

- Clients engaging in songwriting (fill-in-the-blank, rewriting existing songs, creating songs from scratch, and more!) to build skills in cognition, decision-making, organization, problem-solving, emotional expression, self-expression, and coping skills.
- Clients participating in the NMT technique Developmental Speech and Language Training Through Music (DSLTM) to build social communication skills like vocabulary/speech development, clarity and enunciation of speech, and reciprocal communication skills.
- Clients using instruments to match and explore different emotional states, as well as gain insight into related physiological sensations (e.g., tension, heart rate, etc.). This supports healthy development of emotional expression and self-regulation abilities.

What ETLIC Therapists LOVE about Music Therapy:

Alyssa: How different each session can look from person to person—so many ways to use music!

Angie: My favorite thing about music therapy is watching clients grow and make strides in the goals they are working on! No win is too small. I also love learning what music means to my clients. Everyone has different musical tastes, but it is meaningful to everyone!

JoAnna: I love getting to learn about new music styles, artists, and genres when learning about a client's preferences as well as sharing new music with them. I also love getting to see and be a part of a client's progress and milestones!

Pam: Inclusion and the opportunity to let everyone participate at any stage, at any age and any stage of ability.

Rachel: I love how multi-faceted music therapy is—how so many different aspects of music (music-making, lyric discussion, music listening, etc.) can be beneficial to address a wide variety of needs.

Tiffany: I love that I get to combine my 2 passions – music and helping people develop and grow! I really enjoy times when my clients and I make music together. Hearing their positive feedback or seeing the joy they have on their faces after special moments is so rewarding!

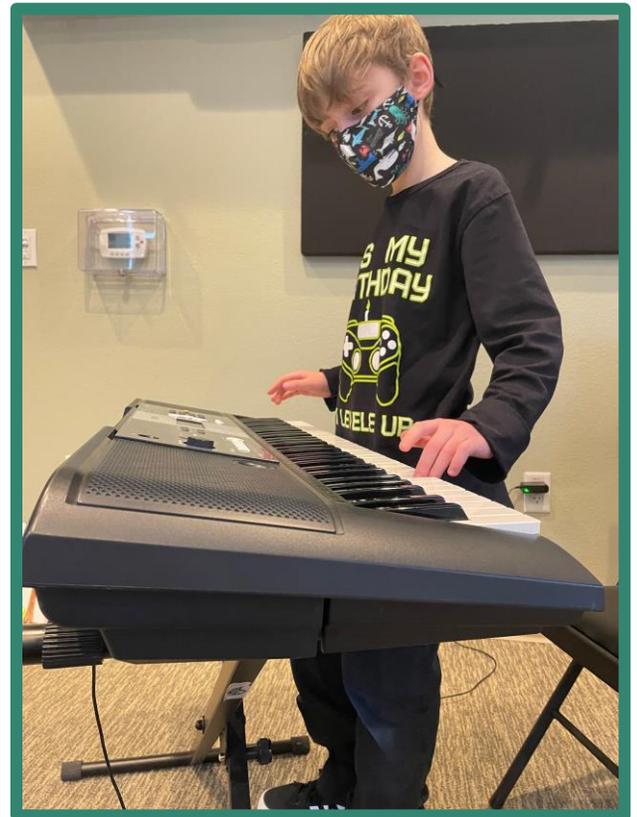
Daniel: Building relationships with all the clients/parents/ team members, and getting to share the world of music while helping clients and myself grow.

Irene: I love seeing how clients respond to instruments or a song. I am often taken by surprise when a client uses their imagination to play an instrument in a unique way and I get to enter into that imagination with them.

Sara: I enjoy watching individuals gain insight into their own lives/situations (knowledge they already have—they just need some nudging to find!) and then make positive changes within these situations through the imagery process.

Kim: I love that music and dance-movement also helps individuals talk about difficult topics with different ways such as listening to music/making a song or using dance/movement to create a story of how clients are feeling even if they do not have the right words to communicate their stressors.

Sandra: I enjoy seeing clients regulate through music and also the self-expression they have. I also greatly appreciate listening as a client rewrites a song to fit their personality or situation.



Art Therapy

Expressive Therapies has a team of 3 art therapists who provide group and individual music therapy sessions to a variety of clients who come to the office. Art therapists are also trained as counselors, integrating this knowledge with creative and artistic expression to address mental health needs and various other need areas. So, what is art therapy?

What is Art Therapy?

Art therapy is a health and human services profession that incorporates the creative process, art-making, and psychological theory to address a variety of goal areas with which clients may present. Some goal areas include: improving self-esteem and self-awareness, developing emotional expression and insight, building social skills, improving cognition and executive functioning abilities, developing sensorimotor skills, and building healthy coping skills and distress tolerance. There is a wide array of art mediums and materials available for creative expression; Art therapists use materials that clients are interested in to address each client's individual identified need areas, informed by psychological theory, the human experience, and creative expression.

To practice art therapy, art therapists must complete a Masters' level education and an art therapy internship. Coursework for art therapists includes the visual arts/creative process in addition to theories and knowledge of human development, psychology, and counseling. Following graduation, art therapists pursue credentialing of "Provisional Registered Art Therapist" or "ATR-P," and after supervised practice experience for a designated number of hours, they can obtain the credential "Registered Art Therapist" or "ATR." These practice hours can also apply towards the "Licensed Professional Counselor" credential, or "LPC," which is awarded after successful completion of the certification exam. Then, if desired, ATRs can later pursue the credential "Board Certified Registered Art Therapist" or "ATR-BC."



Art Therapy Examples

Some examples of art therapy in action at Expression Therapies include:

- Clients engaging in active art making to enhance emotional expression and utilize creative art mediums as a means for gaining insight into different feelings and developing coping skills.
- Clients creating masks to build self-awareness around what they show the world and what they keep to themselves. This also supports improved self-esteem and communication.
- Clients in a group setting participating in collaborative art by creating individual pieces that can be combined or by working together on a single piece. This promotes improved social skills, communication, and executive functioning skills like problem solving, organization, and impulse control.

What ETLIC Therapists LOVE about Art Therapy:

Kim: The best part of being an art therapist is sharing my gifts with others, always learning something new (with learning new art skills from coworkers and clients) and educating others the benefits of using art therapy to help with stress (and also clients validating that art therapy helps them with stressors/difficulties).



Sandra: I love that art therapy gives individuals another way to open up and share what they need to when words are not available to them. When in a place of trauma or anxiety it is sometimes easier to create a depiction of the problem than it is to struggle to put words to it.

Victoria: My favorite thing about art therapy is that it's often not just discussion, it's both playful and adventurous as well as containing, creative and can offer a new perspective for the individual.

JoAnna: I love that art therapy allows clients to explore so many textures and mediums. I also enjoy getting to be a part of those sessions and try new art mediums myself!

Tiffany: I have learned so many professional skills from our art therapists. Collaborating our therapies with clients has been a joy and has enhanced my improvisation skills and flexibility. Collaborating is unique in that our clients receive therapy tailored to their uniqueness.

Dance/Movement Therapy

Dance/Movement therapy is the exciting and new creative arts therapy addition to the Expressive Therapies team! So, what is dance/movement therapy?

What is Dance/Movement Therapy?

Dance/movement therapy promotes the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical well-being of individuals and groups through the therapeutic use of movement. Movement is a crucial element of communication and self-expression, and by exploring and understanding movements dance therapists are able to support healthy integration of the identified areas. Dance/movement therapy is based on the assertion that the mind, body, and spirit are interconnected—expression and changes in the body reflect changes and well-being in the mind. Psychotherapeutic approaches enable the identified areas to be addressed through movement.



Dance/movement therapy first emerged in the 1940s and has been growing ever since. Dance/movement therapists complete graduate level education, with training in dance therapy applications, psychology, and movement observation. Similar to music therapists and art therapists, dance/movement therapists must also complete an internship and then can pursue credentialing. The credential "Registered Dance/Movement Therapist" or "R-DMT" is awarded after graduate education is completed and the individual applies for the credential. Therapists can then pursue the credential "Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist" or "BC-DMT," which signifies an advanced level of practice and ability to provide supervision, and requires a designated number of practice hours, supervision, and essays.

Dance/Movement Therapy Examples

Some examples of dance/movement therapy that you may see at Expressive Therapies include:

- Clients participating in movement warm-ups to ground themselves, develop self-regulation abilities, and integrate sensory experiences
- Clients gaining insight into complex and difficult to verbalize emotions by communicating and expressing themselves non-verbally through movement.
- A client and dance/movement therapist engaging in movement mirroring, where the therapist is matching the movements of the client—mirroring where they are at—and then extending that movement for the client to help support mirror neurons firing.

What ETLIC Therapists LOVE about Dance/Movement Therapy:

Julie: I can honestly say I get to do what I love every day. I ask myself constantly about what I need, as well as my clients, because we are all having a human experience and can relate on some level.



Sandra: I have not seen many dance-movement sessions; however, I love how it is person centered and allows the client to release their feeling and express them through moving and using their body.

Kim: I love that dance-movement also helps individuals talk about difficult topics with different ways such as using dance/movement to create a story of how clients are feeling even if they do not have the right words to communicate their stressors.

Tiffany: I have learned so many professional skills from our dance movement therapist. Collaborating our therapies with clients has been a joy and has enhanced my improvisation

skills and flexibility. Collaborating is unique in that our clients receive therapy tailored to their uniqueness.

Combining the Creative Arts Therapies

Many clients coming to Expressive Therapies have interests in more than one creative art and may participate in more than one creative therapy! In joint or combined sessions, clients are able to participate in 2 different therapies over the span of their appointment time. For these sessions, co-leading therapists utilize elements from each of their respective fields to address a client's goals. A music therapist co-leading with the dance movement therapist may use the natural partnership of movement to music to enhance self-expression and communication, as well as promote sensory integration. An art therapist co-leading with a music therapist may engage in active art-making to music or pair music to created images as a means for enhancing emotional expression and insight, developing coping skills, and addressing executive functioning abilities like decision making and problem solving. By combining different creative arts modalities, therapists are able to address clients' unique needs by attending to their interests and strengths.



Expressive Therapies offers a variety of groups addressing various goals and need areas during the Winter, Summer, and Fall, and many of these groups combine 2 different modalities. In these groups, clients are exposed to a variety of creative arts interventions that are tailored to the goals of the group. A client participating in a music and art therapy group may connect very strongly to art as a regulation tool, but engage and develop social skills more effectively through music interventions. By participating in groups incorporating these different modalities, clients can practice, develop, and apply skills in different areas, and also help with determining what approaches, tools, or strategies are most beneficial for them.

Who Benefits from Creative Arts Therapies?

Music, art, and dance/movement therapy are creative modalities that can support growth, skill development, and support for a variety of populations in different settings. Some of the populations who can benefit from music, art, and dance/movement therapies include:

- Individuals on the Autism Spectrum
- Individuals with dementia/Alzheimer's disease
- Individuals with physical rehabilitation needs
- Individuals in need of neurological rehabilitation, including: post-stroke rehabilitation, improving executive functioning, and traumatic brain injuries
- Individuals with special needs, including: Down Syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, Williams Syndrome, cognitive impairments, developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, non-verbal learning disorders, and ADHD
- Individuals with substance and/or behavioral addictions
- Individuals seeking wellness, including: finding balance in life, motivation for exercise, empowerment, relaxation, and improved self-esteem.
- Individuals with mental health needs, including: depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and low self-esteem and/or self-image.
- Individuals experiencing grief
- Individuals with cancer
- Individuals with other medical needs, including: pain management, reduced nausea, reducing anxiety, improved mood while in the hospital

THANK YOU FOR READING OUR NEWSLETTER!

We appreciate connecting with the community by sharing the specifics of music therapy, art therapy, and dance/movement therapy. If you have further inquiries, we highly recommend you visit our website at www.expressivetherapies.net, our Facebook page (Expressive Therapies), the American Music Therapy Association at www.musictherapy.org, the American Art Therapy Association at <https://arttherapy.org/>, the American Dance Therapy Association at <https://www.adta.org/>, or email us at info@expressivetherapies.net.



Take care and be well!